



# Plzeň Archive Online

## Czechia “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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### GOAL

This guide will teach you how to locate and navigate church records from Czechia on the Plzeň archive website.

### INTRODUCTION

Most church records from Czechia have been digitized and put online for the use of the public. Each archive has its own website and you will need to learn how to use each individual archive. If the records you need are at the Plzeň archive, the instructions here will help you find and use the records online. **You will need to know the name of the town or parish** where your ancestors lived and their **religion**.

You may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- [GenTeam Gazetteer](#)
- [Inserting Special Characters](#)

### HOW TO

The directions for using this website were written using the web browser Google Chrome, which allows for website translation. Other browsers such as Explorer or Firefox may function slightly differently.

#### Viewing the website

The website for the Plzeň archive is found at <http://www.portafontium.eu>. The website is available in Czech and German. Choose your language by looking in the gray navigation bar in the top right corner of the website and clicking on “Čeština” for Czech or “Deutsch” for German. These steps will include first the Czech and then the German words used to navigate the website. Keep in mind that even when using the website in German, some terms appear only in Czech, while other terms are only in German. You may even see, on the rare occasion, words only in English. The website has a tendency to default to Czech; if this happens, you can always choose “Deutsch” in the gray navigation bar at the top of the website.

From the main page, there are two ways to view the website. The dark gray navigation bar at the top of the page is shown on every page of the website, and you may click on any item in this bar at any time.

## Browse view

1. In the dark gray navigation bar at the top of the website, click on “Obsah” or “Inhalt”.
2. From the icons that appear, click on the tree icon in the upper left corner labeled “Matriky” or “Matriken”.
3. You will see a list of religions, listed only in Czech, followed by the time periods the records cover. The following table will assist you in determining the correct religion:

Czech	English
Církev římskokatolická	Roman Catholic Church
Církev evangelická	Evangelical-Lutheran Church
Církev československá	Czechoslovak Hussite Church
Církev českobratrská evangelická	Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Církev Jednota bratrská	Unity of the Brethren/Bohemian Brethren
Církev řeckokatolická	Greek Catholic Church
Církev pravoslavná	Eastern Orthodox Church
Okresní úřad, národní výbor	Non-denominational (civil registration)
Standesamt	Civil registration

4. For illustration purposes, click on “Církev římskokatolická”, or Roman Catholic Church. You should see an alphabetical list of parishes down the left side of the page, along with the alphabet at the top of the section. Click on the section “C/Č/CH for all parishes that start with C. Note that Czech has letters with special marks, called diacritical marks. Keep in mind these letters are separate letters in Czech; to learn how to insert them, click [here](#).
5. Click on the parish of Čížkov. The page you see will provide some important information for you about the parish. Under “Existence” we see that the parish was established in 1714. The next section explains jurisdictions; the words “Německý název” indicate the German name for the town—in this case, Tschischkau. If you are using Google Chrome as your browser, right click on the page and select “Translate to English”. You can then read the information provided about the parish. In the case of Čížkov, it states that the parish was established in 1663 from the parish of Vrčeň, and that registers before 1714 were held at the parish of Kasejovice.
6. The next section, in light gray, is titled “Budoucí přírůstky” / “Zukünftige Erweiterungen” or future additions. These are books that are in the archives listed under “Uložení” / “Lagerungsort” that are not available online because of privacy laws.
7. The section in slightly darker gray under the title “Digitalizované knihy” or digitized books list the volumes available online. Each entry is a separate book and labeled. The first entry, for example, is under the heading “Nadpis” / “Titel” or title and is church book Čížkov 01. “Místo” / “Ort” or locations list all villages contained in the volume. Note that sometimes villages have their own volumes, while other times all villages are recorded in the same book. “Datace” / “Laufzeit” records the years available for the book, along with symbols representing the type of record in the volume. In the case of church book

Čížkov 01, it contains the records from 1701-1720 and includes births (\*), marriages (oo), and deaths (+). Anytime you see the letter “i” following a symbol, it indicates that there is an index for that record type. Church book Čížkov 01 contains a birth index (\*i) for the years 1701-1720. To access the book, click on the blue magnifying glass icon to the far right of the entry.

## Search view

1. In the dark gray navigation bar at the top of the page, click on the words next to the magnifying glass, “Vyhledávání” or “Recherche”. Here you will see a list of all entries on the entire website. To limit your search to just the church records, select the tab “Matriky” or “Matriken”, found in the row of tabs immediately underneath the dark gray navigation bar, second from the left.
2. Enter the name of your village or parish in the field “Místo” or “Ort”. For illustrative purposes, enter in the name of the town of Přešín. In this search feature, you do not need to enter the diacritical marks; you can just type in “Presin”. Note that if you have the name of your town in German, you can also enter it here, again without entering in the diacritical marks. The only exception to this is the letter “ß” – the website does not recognize this German letter as “ss”. You must also enter in the exact name of the town; the website does not do partial or wildcard searches for town names.
3. Under the heading “Typ”, you can select the record type you would like to search. If you do not select a record type, all records will be shown. The following table will help you understand the types of records available for searching:

Czech	German	English
Matrika narozených	Geburtsmatrik	Birth records
Matrika oddaných	Trauungsmatrik	Marriage records
Matrika zemřelých	Sterbematrik	Death records
Index narozených	Geburten Index	Birth index
Index oddaných	Trauungen Index	Marriage index
Index zemřelých	Sterbefälle Index	Death index


4. Next to the clickable list of record types, you can limit your search by year. Enter the first year of your search in “Od roku” or “Von Jahr”, and the last year of your search in “Do roku” or “Bis Jahr”. Leaving these blank will return results for all years.
5. When you are done entering in your search parameters, click on the gray box “OK”. A list of all entries containing the town name will appear. Read step 7 above to learn how to navigate this list. To view the records of a volume, click on the blue magnifying glass at the far right of the entry. For illustrative purposes, choose the volume Čížkov 01.

## Viewing the records

Once you have clicked on the blue magnifying glass, you will be taken to the image viewer. The large image in the center of the page is the first image of the book, usually the cover. The column on the left contains thumbnail images of every page of the book, with a side scroll bar to scroll down the thumbnails. Each thumbnail is labeled with the image number in the lower left

corner and the type of image in the lower right: \* for birth, oo for marriage, or + for death. For information about the contents of the book, use the scroll bar for the whole browser on the far right. Look for the descriptions, often beginning with the word “Zápisy”, but containing the abbreviation “fol.” or folio. If the volume has multiple record types, the letters tell the type of record—“N” for births, “O” for marriages, and “Z” for deaths—followed by the year span and the image numbers. The “fol.” indicate folio numbers for each section of the book. Folio numbers are different from page numbers in that they number two pages rather than one. This means that the folio number will not necessarily match the image number, but they shouldn't be more than a few numbers off from each other.

There are many features in the toolbar located at the top of the screen. When you hover your mouse over an icon, its function will appear in a small pop-up bubble in English, Czech, and German. The following are additional features:

- **Saving an image:** in the blue menu bar above the image viewer, you will find a blue arrow pointing downward  left of the church book description. Click on the arrow. A new tab will open while the website processes the download, which will disappear after the image is downloaded. The default location of the download should be your computer's “Download” folder.
- **Linking:** The URL in the address bar at the top of the page links to a specific image. To link to the specific position on an image, copy the entire URL. To link to just the image page, copy the URL up to but not including the question mark. To copy the URL, click in the address bar until the URL is highlighted. Right-click on your mouse, and select copy. You can now paste the link as a source citation in a genealogy program or website such as FamilySearch's Family Tree.

## PRACTICE

1. Go to the website for the Plzeň archive, located at <http://www.portafontium.eu>. Select your language, either Čeština or Deutsch, in the upper right corner of the website.
2. Click on “Obsah” or “Inhalt”, located in the dark gray navigation bar at the top of the page. Then, click on the tree icon, labeled “Matriky” or “Matriken”.
3. Choose the Evangelical Lutheran church records by clicking on “Církev evangelická”. Next, click on the records for Karlovy Vary.
4. In the section “Budoucí přírůstky”, notice the records for Karlovy Vary for 1927-1938 are not scanned, but are located at the “Uložení” or “Lagerungsort” of the Magistrát města or city office of Karlovy Vary. Now notice that in the section “Digitalizované knihy”, the first volume of the records are for births beginning in 1862. Scroll down until you find the volume that would contain the marriage records for the year 1867; they are in volume Karlovy Vary-evangelická 04. Click on the blue magnifying glass to the right of the entry.
5. You are now in the individual volume for the marriages. Page through the images until you find the marriages for 1867; they are on image 5, and there is only one entry for the year.

6. Now, in the dark gray navigation bar at the top of the page, click on the magnifying glass next to the words “Vyhledávání” or “Recherche”. Click on the tab “Matriky” or “Matriken” directly under the dark gray navigation bar. Under “Místo” or “Ort”, type in the town name of “Wintersgrün”. Click on the gray box labeled “OK”.
7. Notice that the town name in Czech is Vintřřov, as shown by the name Wintersgrün following it in parentheses, and that the earliest records available date from 1671. Find the volume that would contain births for the year 1822. These are indicated by the symbol \*. They are located in volume Chodov 17. Click on the blue magnifying glass to the right of the entry.
8. Using the scroll bar on the far right side of the website, scroll down the entire page until you see the description of the volume underneath the images. Here you will see that the index for the volume is available on folio 91-93. Now, scroll through the image thumbnails on the left side of the webpage until you get to image 91. Look at the thumbnail description in the lower right corner of thumbnail 91 – it is a (\*), indicating that the image contains births. Look down until you find the thumbnail description of a (\*i), indicating the index. You will see it on image 93. Click on this image.
9. Now, use the navigation tools to zoom in and out. If you wanted to download this image, you would look in the blue bar underneath the dark gray navigation bar, and you would click on the white down arrow to the left of the church book description.

## ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.